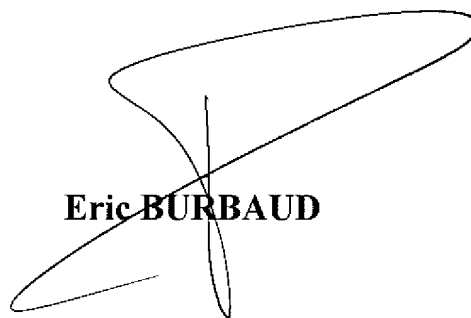


CERTIFICATION OF TRANSLATION

I, Eric BURBAUD, of Cabinet Plasseraud, 65/67 rue de la Victoire, 75440 PARIS Cedex 09, France, do hereby declare that I am well acquainted with the French and English languages, and verify that the document attached is a true English language translation of the text of the French amended claims of PCT application N° FR2004/03057 filed on November 29, 2004.

Dated this 24th day of May 2006.



Eric BURBAUD

CLAIMS

1. A method of automatically renting bicycles (1) by means of interactive terminal posts (2) which communicate remotely with at least one rental management server (11),
5 and each of which controls a plurality of locking stations (9) to which the bicycles (1) are locked, said method comprising the following steps:

(a) an initial step consisting in:

• reading a payment card (6);
10 • communicating with an electronic money server (10) for generating a debit authorization for debiting a certain maximum value from an account associated with the payment card, this authorization being valid for a limited period;

15 • allocating an authorization identifier to said authorization; and

• storing the authorization identifier in the rental management server (11);

(b) at least one subsequent rental step taking place during said limited period and consisting in:

20 • a user who wishes to rent a bicycle (1) indicating at least one identity code associated with said authorization identifier;

• the rental management server (11) being used to
25 verify that the identity code indicated by the user corresponds to said authorization identifier stored in said rental management server;

• the bicycle rental being authorized or not authorized as a function of said verification; and

30 • a rental account in the rental management server (11) being incremented, said rental account corresponding to said authorization identifier; and

(c) a debit step consisting in the rental management server (11) communicating to the electronic money server
35 (10) the authorization identifier and an amount to be debited from said account associated with the payment card, said amount being a function of the rental

operations effected, inclusively from said initial step, said amount being no more than said maximum value.

2. A method according to claim 1, in which, during the
5 initial step, the identity code is communicated to a user and, during each subsequent rental step, the identity code is input by said user on an input interface (3).

3. A method according to claim 1, in which, during the
10 initial step, the identity code is written on an information medium (8), and, during each subsequent rental step, the identity code is read automatically from said information medium (8).

4. A method according to claim 3, in which, during the
15 initial step, a ticket (8) bearing said identity code and constituting said information medium is issued.

5. A method according to claim 4, [according to any
20 preceding claim,]in which, during the initial step, the identity code is recorded on a magnetic stripe (8a) carried by said ticket.

6. A method according to claim 4 or claim 5, in which the
25 code borne by the ticket (8) is written at least in part during the initial step, after the debit authorization.

7. A method according to claim 6, in which the code
written on the ticket (8) includes the authorization
30 identifier generated during the initial step.

8. A method according to claim 6, in which the code
written on the ticket (8) is pre-written at least in part
prior to the initial step, and, during said initial step,
35 a correspondence between the code written on the ticket and the identifier determined during the debit authorization is stored in a memory.

9. A method according to claim 8, in which the code
written on the ticket comprises a pre-written portion
written before the initial step and a portion written
5 during said initial step.

10. A method according to any one of claims 4 to 9, in
which [according to any preceding claim], during the
initial step, a payment card (6) of predetermined format
10 is used, and the ticket (8) presents said predetermined
format.

11. A method according to claim 10, in which the payment
card (6) presents a magnetic stripe (6a) having a
15 predetermined position, the ticket (8) also presents a
magnetic stripe (8a) having the same position, and the
identity code is written on the magnetic stripe of said
ticket (8).

12. A method according to claim 1, [according to any
preceding claim,] in which, during the initial step, a
code borne by a mobile phone is recorded as the identity
code, and, during each subsequent rental step, the user
calls a predetermined number, the calling telephone
25 number is determined, and the authorization identifier
corresponding to said identity code is thus determined.

13. A method according to any preceding claim, in which,
during each subsequent rental step, when the bicycle (1)
30 is returned to a locking station (9), said bicycle is
locked again to said locking station.

14. A method according to any preceding claim, in which
the debit step is implemented at a time that is
35 predetermined relative to the initial step.

15. A method according to any preceding claim, in which the debit step is implemented when the cumulative cost of the rental operations that have taken place during said limited period reaches a certain predetermined amount
5 that is no more than said maximum value.

16. A method according to any preceding claim, in which the initial step includes an initial rental step during which, after the debit authorization, at least one
10 bicycle (1) that is locked to a locking station (9) is released, and then, when the bicycle is returned to a locking station, said bicycle is locked to said locking station again.

15 17. A method according to any preceding claim, in which, each time a rental operation takes place, the value of a sum owed by the user of the payment card is incremented.

18. A method according to any preceding claim, in which
20 each bicycle is identified at least when it is taken out and when it is returned, and when a bicycle taken out is not identified as a bicycle returned at the end of a certain predetermined time limit, the debit step is preformed immediately, and a deposit is debited from said
25 account.

19. A method according to any preceding claim, in which, during the initial step, a confidential code is determined, and, during each subsequent rental step, the
30 rental is authorized only after verifying that the confidential code is known by the user requesting the rental.

20. A method according to any preceding claim, in which
35 provision is made for the confidential code to be chosen by the user during the initial step.

21. A method according to any preceding claim, in which, during the initial step, an address given by the user is stored in a memory, and communication is established with the user via said address if a bicycle taken out using
 5 the identity code of said user is not returned within a predetermined time limit.

22. A system for implementing a method according to any preceding claim, said system comprising:

10 · interactive terminal posts (2) which communicate remotely with at least one rental management server (11), and each of which controls a plurality of locking stations (9) to which the bicycles (1) are locked;

 · means (5) for reading a payment card (6);

15 · means (2a) for communicating with an electronic money server (10) for obtaining a debit authorization for debiting a certain maximum value from an account associated with the payment card, said authorization being valid for a limited period, and said authorization
 20 being identified by an authorization identifier;

 · means for storing said authorization identifier in the rental management server (11); and

 · means for acting by communicating with the rental management server (11) to determine whether an identity
 25 code indicated by a user corresponds to said authorization identifier, so as to authorize or not authorize the desired rental of a bicycle as a function of said verification, and so as to increment, each time bicycle rental is effected, a rental account in the
 30 rental management server (11), said rental account corresponding to said authorization identifier;

 · the rental management server (11) being adapted to communicate to the electronic money server (10) the authorization identifier and an amount to be debited from
 35 said account associated with the payment card, said amount being a function of the rental operations effected and being no more than said maximum value.